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A high-class Fertilizer for Pot Plants and for use in the Garden generally; it supplies natural nutriment to the soil, and assists the process of assimilation, thereby aiding the Plants to attain to their full size, vigour, and beauty.

Sold in Tins containing 10 lbs. each, £1.75.
25 lbs. " " £4.50.
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The Best and Cheapest Machines in the Market.
For Sale at Manufacturers' Prices.

A. S. WATSON & CO., LIMITED.
THE HONGKONG DISPENSARY,
Established A.D. 1841.

Hongkong, 11th September, 1894. 120

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Only communications relating to the news columns should be addressed to "The Daily Press," and not to the Editor. Communications should be sent before 11 a.m. on the day of publication. After that hour they will be treated as private letters.

All letters for publication should be written on one side of the paper only.
No anonymous communications should be accepted. If a signature is given, the Editor will be obliged to insert the name of the contributor.

Telegraphic Address Press.
P. O. Box 35.

The Daily Press.

HONGKONG, OCTOBER 31st, 1894.

It was unfortunate that at the meeting of the Sanitary Board on Thursday last, there should have been only two official members present to represent the public, as against three officials, in the discussion of the waterworks question. A sixth member was present in the person of Dr. James, of the Army Service Corps, but he refrained from voting, and for the purposes of this particular question the meeting may be considered to have consisted of five members only. Mr. Francis moved that the management of the waterworks be transferred to the Sanitary Board as the Water Authority, which was seconded by Mr. Linton. The three official members, to whom any control by a public body over an official department must necessarily be repugnant, voted solidly against the motion, which was consequently defeated. How curiously officious was Mr. Francis's mind may be seen strikingly exemplified in the speech of Mr. F. H. Max, the Vice-President of the Board, who presided on the occasion. Mr. Max says that if the proposed transfer were made extra assistance would have to be procured, and it would simply be paying a man for what the ratepayers now get done for nothing. It is such a singular thing to find anything done for nothing by officials that we look with lively curiosity into Mr. Max's speech to find where this phenomenon can be discovered, or how it can be explained, in connection with the waterworks. And the curiosity is rewarded, for we are at once confronted with the astounding statement that "the present Director of Public Works" does not receive one single cent for the "work he does, very arduous and responsible work it is, as the Water Authority." Then what does Mr. Coorren draw his salary for? Mr. Max would reply that he draws it as Director of Public Works, which is true, but the Director of Public Works, or Surveyor-General as the office was formerly styled, has always been in charge of the waterworks, as Mr. Coorren is, and the duties in connection therewith have been considered part of his ordinary work. It is true that for a short time a special Water and Drainage sub-department was constituted, but that was more particularly with reference to drainage and the arrangements were regarded merely as temporary to meet a particular emergency. Mr. Coorren was in charge of this special and temporary sub-department, and when the late Mr. Brown died, succeeded to the office of Director of Public Works. Mr. Max, championing Mr. Coorren's cause in a way that we should think that officer himself would hardly approve, says that Mr. Coorren "gets the same salary as his predecessor, and when the two posts were combined the salary he enjoyed as 'Engineer in charge of the Waterworks' was 'knocked off' by an economising Government." Therefore it appears to Mr. Max that the ratepayers of this Colony are extremely fortunate in the existing state

of affairs. Fortunately, indeed! As we are told in the report of the Estimates Committee, in 1874 the salaries and personal emoluments of the Director of Public Works Department amounted to \$19,221, in 1884 the amount had increased to \$25,423, and it is now \$49,892. And this is what Mr. Max calls getting work done "free, gratis, and for nothing!"

To constitute the Sanitary Board the Water Authority might or might not entail some extra expense. On the whole we should think it would tend towards economy, for it is inconceivable that under a public representative body any increase of expenditure at all analogous to that which has taken place in the Public Works Department could ever be allowed without something to show for it. The question is not one to be discussed with special reference to expenditure, however. The administration of the water supply vitally affects the sanitation of the town and the health, comfort, and convenience of the inhabitants, and it is right and proper that it should be in the hands of a public representative body. In most towns in England the waterworks are now owned and administered by the Municipal Councils or Local Boards, but there are some, where, like the metropolis, still remain under the control of the Corporation. Mr. CHARTERIS, the Acting Director of Public Works, at the meeting on Thursday, instanced London in support of his argument that it was unnecessary to transfer the waterworks here to the control of the Sanitary Board. But any Londoner would tell him that the example of the metropolis in this respect is one to be avoided rather than emulated. In course of time no doubt London, like the large provincial towns, will secure control of its own water supply, but the vested interests to be dealt with date back to centuries as long as two hundred years, and there are special difficulties in the way. And it is open to question whether the tyranny of the home water companies is anything like equal to that exercised by our local Water Authority. Companies that charge a rate are under an obligation to give an adequate supply of water to the ratepayers, but our Local Authority may cut the supply off entirely whenever it pleases, the whole community may on occasions be reduced to going without the usual morning bath, and there are many houses whose consumption is limited to what is called "a prescribed domestic quantity" of five gallons a day. The home companies are, moreover, amenable in some degree to public criticism and have to be careful as to work their monopoly too oppressively lest they forfeit their privileges altogether, but a Hongkong official naturally considers himself above criticism. Hongkong is the only place we have ever heard of where the water supply has been placed entirely under the control of one single individual, and the sooner the system is altered the better.

An objection raised to the Sanitary Board being constituted the Water Authority is that the Board is incapable of supervising the construction of works. Assuming the Board to be afflicted with such incapacity, the defect does not necessarily touch the point at issue. The preamble to the Waterworks Ordinance, having recited that large sums have from time to time been expended, and may hereafter be expended in the establishment and maintenance of waterworks, declares that it is expedient "to provide for and regulate the supply of water from such works as well as the maintenance and repair of all works in connection therewith," and for that purpose a Water Authority is constituted. The original construction of the works, we take it, appertains to the Public Works Department, and the Water Authority as a separate entity has only to do with the regulation of the supply after the works are completed and with the maintenance and repair of the works. The Board seems to fear. The Board was constituted as the official members of the Board seem to fear. The Board was constituted as the official members of the Board seem to fear. The Board was constituted as the official members of the Board seem to fear.

The N. P. Co's steamer Victoria left Yokohama yesterday for Taoma, and will call for Hongkong via Kobe 1st day.

The C. P. steamer Empress of China arrived at Nagasaki at 10 p.m. yesterday and left at 3 p.m. for Shanghai, where she is expected to arrive at 6 a.m. tomorrow.

To-morrow morning, between 9 and 10.30 o'clock, the steamship Doro, carrying the Bethel ship, will call alongside any vessel holding out payment to convey men ashore to 11 a.m. service at St. Peter's (Seamen's) Church, returning about 12.30.

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